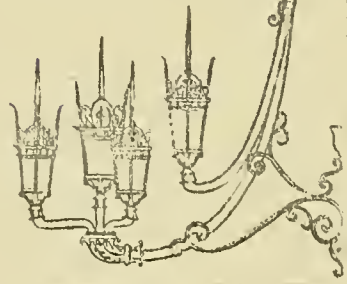


BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 06584 359 9

BOSTON  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY







Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2011 with funding from  
Boston Public Library

<http://www.archive.org/details/reportonprogress00bost>

GOVDOC

BRA

4194

(Boston Redevelopment Authority)

PROGRESS REPORT

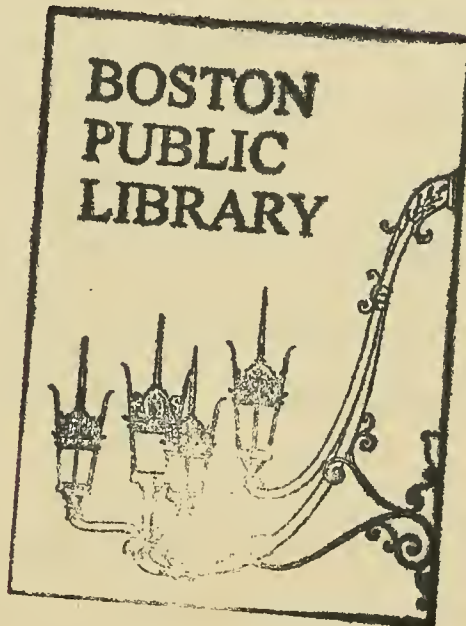
ON

THE WORKABLE PROGRAM

FOR

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

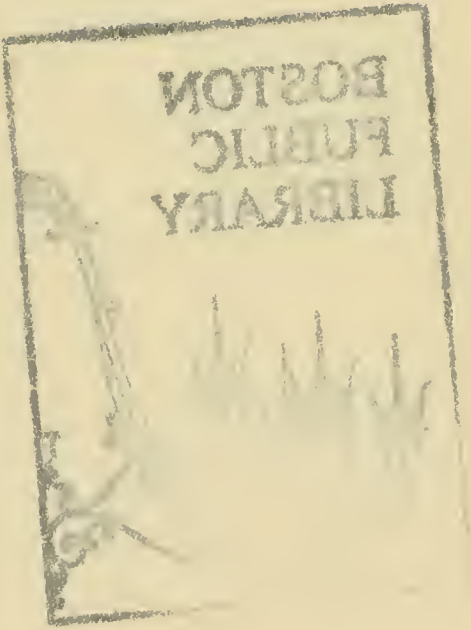
944 05-101



Boston, Massachusetts

August, 1963

BOSTON  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY



August 1, 1963

A REPORT ON PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING THE GOALS OF BOSTON'S  
WORKABLE PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

Federal law requires that cities seeking federal urban renewal and public housing funds report each year on the progress they are making in eliminating slums and blighted areas and in preventing the spread of blight into new areas, not only in designated project areas but in the community as a whole.

Neither program nor progress is perfect, but the accomplishments to date will stand comparison with any other city in the United States.

Our program continues to be comprehensive in scope, rehabilitation-oriented, emphasizing new schools and other community facilities. Its hallmark is planning with people.

One of the most dramatic changes has been in the business climate and in the prevailing attitudes about the future of the city, emphasized by the widespread use of the New Boston slogan.

Yet, at the same time, we must recognize that this is the critical build-up year, the time when the vital,

Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the [Company Name]

The Board of Directors has the honor to acknowledge the interest and assistance of the stockholders in the management of the affairs of the company during the year ending on the 31st day of December, 1880.

The business of the company during the year has been conducted in accordance with the plan adopted at the annual meeting of the stockholders on the 15th day of December, 1879, and the results of the same are set forth in the following statement:

The assets of the company at the beginning of the year were \$100,000, and at the end of the year were \$110,000, an increase of \$10,000. The liabilities at the beginning of the year were \$50,000, and at the end of the year were \$55,000, an increase of \$5,000. The net assets at the beginning of the year were \$50,000, and at the end of the year were \$55,000, an increase of \$5,000.

The income of the company during the year was \$20,000, and the expenses were \$15,000, leaving a net income of \$5,000. This net income has been distributed to the stockholders in the form of a dividend of \$5,000.

The Board of Directors has the honor to recommend to the stockholders the payment of a dividend of \$5,000, and to recommend the re-election of the Board of Directors for the year ending on the 31st day of December, 1881.



but sometimes obscure, work of preparation is being completed.

In the months to come, we shall witness a marked increase in activity as construction starts, marking the transition from plans to performance.

To gain perspective, it may be useful to look back just a few short years. Throughout the country, with rare and scattered exceptions, cities were on the decline. Despite a progressive-minded city administration, Boston experienced more than most cities the problems of urban decay.

At the close of the 1950's, Boston was in deep and serious trouble. The spread of blight in our older residential neighborhoods had progressed rapidly, and Boston had gained the unfortunate distinction of having one of the highest tax rates in the nation, one which threatened to spiral upward even further.

Perhaps most important of all, despite the beginning steps toward the Prudential and Government Center developments, this was a city which seemed to have lost confidence in itself. Between 1950 and 1960 more than 150,000 people who could afford the choice moved out of the city. The



economic strength of downtown Boston was at a low ebb, and there were altogether too few bright prospects for the future.

Today the framework has been established to achieve in fact as well as in purpose a new and finer Boston.

There has been a great deal of emphasis on the more dramatic and large-scale parts of our Program in downtown Boston. These projects -- Government Center, Waterfront, Central Business District -- are of vital importance to the health of our city's economy and to maintaining the lessened tax rate which we now enjoy.

What I would ask that we not lose sight of is the primary and over-riding emphasis on the Development Program which is focused on the citizens of Boston and the stability and attractiveness of the neighborhoods in which they live. A city, as has often been said, is its people, and the foremost policy of our Development Program is to make Boston a finer, safer and better place in which to live and raise a family.

Much has been done in our neighborhood renewal projects during the past year. Much more is planned for the year ahead. I believe that we have



achieved a pattern of neighborhood renewal which can meet our goals in halting the spread of blight and increasing the strength of our neighborhoods.

One of the foremost goals of the neighborhood renewal plan is to provide a renewal school plant which can provide educational opportunities for Boston's children comparable to those in the suburbs which surround us. Too much of Boston's school plant is old and obsolete. As the Harvard study showed, a large-scale and comprehensive school rebuilding program is necessary to provide facilities which can meet modern educational standards.

Harvard

During the past year, the Sargent School Study was completed and released. It has been endorsed by the Redevelopment Authority and by Mayor Collins as a guide for the planning of new school facilities throughout the city.

The successful carrying out of the Sargent School Building Program can be the most effective and dramatic symbol of the improvement in Boston's older neighborhoods.

Equally important to the preservation and improvement of neighborhoods is the quality of the housing supply. The Development Program is aimed at achieving a breakthrough



both in the construction of new, low-cost, private housing and in providing the tools and techniques for housing rehabilitation on a large scale.

The next few years will see the construction of several thousand units of new, low-cost housing under the 221(d)3 program with rents which are far lower than it has been possible to achieve in current housing construction in Boston. These new units will not only provide housing for displaced families, but will add new strength to older neighborhoods which have not achieved any appreciable measure of new construction in the past two decades or more.

The first housing development in Washington Park is expected to be completed next spring. It will demonstrate to one and all that we are capable of providing a standard of new housing which can be attractive throughout the city.

At the same time, intensified efforts in housing rehabilitation will open the door to saving the vast majority of the existing housing supply that is still in structurally sound condition. The most significant step in this effort was the announcement by the Housing Administrator, Robert C. Weaver, that the city and the





Federal Housing Administration have agreed to a set of rehabilitation standards which will apply throughout the city and can be utilized as a basis for obtaining favorable mortgage financing in renewal areas for rehabilitation purposes.

In all the neighborhood renewal rehabilitation efforts we have continued to follow the guiding principle of "planning with people." This is no idle phrase. We do not follow the principle only when people agree with us. We follow it also when differences exist, where concerns are expressed. Where it succeeds, as in Washington Park, the result is a locally supported, effective renewal plan. Where opposition arises, as in Charlestown, it is our policy to continue detailed discussions, to meet objections, and to revise plans as necessary.

It does mean an unparalleled effort -- unparalleled in this city or in any other -- to engage in a constructive and cooperative discussion with neighborhood residents, to encourage -- if you will -- more direct participation by the citizens in the affairs and policies of their city government.



The Workable Program document itself contains the details of many other aspects of the work which have taken place in the past year and which will continue in the year ahead in areas such as code enforcement, capital budgeting, comprehensive planning, and citizen participation. It is sufficient to say here that I believe we have established through these efforts and others the essential framework for meeting the goals of the Development Program in the period which lies before us.

Before concluding, it might be well to re-state briefly two of the most important principles on which the Program is based.

First, the Development Program represents a comprehensive approach. Boston, like nearly every other older, major American city, has large-scale problems. Its past decline, its high tax rate, its obsolete buildings, its deteriorating neighborhoods -- all the complex problems which must be faced -- have not sprung from a single source.

The program to rebuild and revitalize Boston cannot thus be based on a limited or piecemeal approach. The comprehensive approach remains as a cornerstone of the Development Program.



Secondly, we need and will continue to need substantial outside financial assistance. Boston cannot afford from its own resources to renew and rebuild itself. The program must be based on substantial Federal and State assistance. It would perhaps be simpler and quicker if Boston could do the job without outside help. But that is not a practical alternative.

The Federal Government has demonstrated its confidence in the Boston Program by making Federal loans and grants available when required. This assistance can have the beneficial effect for Boston of limiting the city's financial share of the Program to the construction of public facilities and improvements such as schools, streets, parks, playgrounds, utilities, and parking structures. In this way, Boston can absorb the cost of the Development Program within its capital budget resources. At the same time, we should continue to receive as necessary the proper measure of State financial assistance in accordance with the already established matching formula.

At this point it is appropriate to turn to a project by project status report of the renewal program.



### DOWNTOWN BOSTON

The downtown Boston peninsula is truly the hub of our city. This is the capital of the New England region as well as the State. Here is the center of commerce and trade as well as Boston's cultural heritage. For too many years downtown Boston has relied on its past strengths; the surge of construction and new economic activity which has been so marked in cities such as New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco has left Boston behind. Today, however, we see the unmistakable signs that Boston is on the verge of a building boom and a period of economic growth which will be unmatched in the city's history. This is the setting and framework for the report on the downtown Boston rebuilding program.

### GOVERNMENT CENTER

Government Center is Boston's most important downtown rebuilding project. It can provide a dramatic and attractive major new center to house not only key government buildings, but major private development as well.





Tens of millions of dollars of construction can get underway this year. The \$25,000,000 construction contract has been awarded for the 30-story Federal Office Building, and relocation of the MTA line from Scollay Square to Haymarket Square stations is well underway. The bids for the foundation contract for the new City Hall will be open on August 20. The final working drawings for the State Service Center will be completed early in 1964.

Moreover, the Government Center Project contains several important private development sites. The working drawings for the first section of the One Center Plaza building located along Cambridge Street will be completed in August of this year. Construction can then begin within thirty (30) days after all the necessary public approvals have been received. The total final investment in this building is established at nearly \$20,000,000.

The fate of the proposed \$20,000,000 35-story private office tower on State Street, known as Parcel 8, and the remaining private sites in the Project await the approval of the Government Center plan.



DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT-FANEUIL HALL

Federal approval for the final planning of the Waterfront Project was received on December 31, 1962. A contract was then entered into between the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the Downtown Waterfront Corporation for final planning for the area.

This relationship carries out the partnership policy of the city administration and the BRA in seeking active participation by responsible groups in downtown as well as in neighborhood projects.

The preliminary renewal plan presented in mid-1962 provides for private apartment and office towers to make Boston's Atlantic Avenue waterfront a prosperous and exciting section of downtown.

I am pleased to report that progress on the final plan is proceeding well. There are indications of substantial interest in the major private developments contemplated in the preliminary plan.

Adjustments in the final plan are being made as detailed planning and feasibility studies progress. It should be noted, however, that full achievement of the plan potential cannot be realized without suitable tidelands legislation.



CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

A \$200,000,000 revitalization program for the 158-acre Central Business District was started with Federal approval of a Survey and Planning Application in March of this year. The project will be planned and carried out in close cooperation with the Committee for the Central Business District, a non-profit corporation formed to promote the revitalization of downtown. Preliminary plans are being prepared by the noted architectural and planning firm of Victor Gruen Associates, Inc., under contracts with the Committee for the Central Business District and the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

SOUTH COVE

Council approval of an application for survey and planning funds for the South Cove Project was received in May, and the Survey and Planning Application is now undergoing Federal review. Its approval will pave the way for the start of detailed planning work on this important project. The plan will endeavor to



provide suitable space for the Tufts-New England Medical Center and the Chinese community, as well as other neighborhood groups and institutions within a vastly improved environment.

#### PRUDENTIAL CENTER

The striking Prudential Center is now well on the way to completion in the old Back Bay railroad yards. This 52-story office tower, containing well over 1,000,000 square feet, is properly viewed by many people as the symbol of the New Boston. It was not achieved without a long and difficult struggle, but I believe that its success argues well for the future of the downtown rebuilding program.

#### BACK BAY

The historic Back Bay of Boston contains an important part of Boston's commercial life as well as a large residential neighborhood. With the construction of the Turnpike extension and other changes which are now taking place, it is important that the area receive close study with a view toward establishing policy guidelines for the future. I am very pleased





to report that the Back Bay Association in cooperation with the BRA is taking the first steps toward the preparation of such a Development Program. The Association has retained professional assistance to help chart a future course for this important area. We shall continue to cooperate in every way in this effort to guide the future of the Back Bay.

#### SOUTH STATION

The BRA early this year prepared a preliminary proposal for the redevelopment of the South Station area for a 5,000-car parking garage and related uses in an effort to pave the way for the reclamation of this important and under utilized land area. The land is now occupied by the bankrupt Boston Terminal Company, which faces the prospect of diminishing railroad use in each passing year. The South Station area is strategically located at the end of the Boston extension of the Massachusetts Turnpike and can provide much economic assistance to the downtown retail core. The proposal is framed in such a way that necessary future rail use can be accommodated while the bulk of the property is redeveloped with new construction. Independent appraisals of the Terminal



Company's properties are now underway, and it is our hope that they will provide a basis for reaching agreement on the acquisition value of the area.

These, then, are the projects which embrace downtown Boston. They are well on the way toward providing the physical framework and the climate for the surge of economic growth which can lie before us. They are, of course, only part of the Development Program, and we should turn at this point to the status of the key neighborhood renewal projects.

#### THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF BOSTON

The neighborhood renewal program is dedicated toward preserving and improving the older neighborhoods of Boston as a place to live and raise a family. The process of neighborhood renewal is complex and time consuming. Yet it is the only way in which needed improvements can be financed and coordinated so as to have maximum impact.



WASHINGTON PARK

The Washington Park Project is the pace setter for the neighborhood renewal program. Embracing some 502 acres, the project entered the execution stage on April 30, 1963, following two years of intensive planning and consultation with neighborhood residents. The large scale and continued support for the Washington Park Project is a symbol of success in planning with people.

The coming year will see a growing list of improvements in Washington Park. The first 200 units of low-cost relocation housing will be completed early next year with rents ranging from \$75 to \$115 per month for one to four bedrooms, including heat.

Rehabilitation has made an impressive beginning. Already more than \$1,000,000 of rehabilitation work is in process, involving nearly 1,000 dwelling units. Family relocation is also progressing well. As of August 1, 323 families had been relocated into decent, safe, and sanitary housing. Finally, we should note the demonstration of faith in the Washington Park plan which has resulted from the BRA's ad for proposals to develop the new Washington Park Shopping Center. Four



serious and responsible proposals were received and are now being reviewed by the Authority's design staff. Construction can begin early next year on this important commercial reuse in the project. In addition, the Y.M.C.A. is prepared to move ahead with its construction, and strong developer interest has been expressed in additional housing sites.

#### CHARLESTOWN

The principal cause of blight in the Charlestown district has long been recognized as the elevated MTA structure. The neighborhood as a whole has steadily declined over the years. The BRA-proposed plan can provide the ways and means for moving the elevated and reversing the decline of Charlestown.

The initial BRA proposal to provide moderate rental relocation housing in advance of relocation needs met with considerable opposition at the public hearing in January.

The draft plan emphasized the rehabilitation of more than 80 percent of the existing dwelling units,





together with the provision of new schools and community facilities. There was understandable skepticism about the success of any effort to remove the elevated.

It was clear at the public hearing that there was substantial support for the intent and goals for removal of the elevated. The proposal for pilot rehabilitation received strong support at that time.

Subsequently, pilot rehabilitation work has begun, and a special rehabilitation site office has been opened in the neighborhood. The draft plan is being re-worked in an effort to meet the concerns which were expressed at the January public hearing.

Following the impressive demonstration of public and civic support for legislation authorizing the removal of the elevated, Senate Bill 417 now appears close to passage. Upon its passage the BRA will be in a position to begin the process of obtaining the necessary financial administrative approvals leading to the removal of the elevated. This legislation can be a striking demonstration of the city's ability to root out the single most important blighting factor in this important neighborhood. It will also provide the means for a substantial improvement in MTA facilities.



We expect that a revised draft plan for Charlestown will be complete within the near future. We are hopeful that it will answer many of the questions raised last January.

#### SOUTH END

The South End has long been the most troubled and seriously blighted neighborhood in Boston. The first beginnings of its rebuilding are now becoming evident.

Pilot rehabilitation is well underway. The residents of the South End have joined together in an effective and hard-working Neighborhood Renewal Committee effort. Their goal, which we share, is to reclaim the South End as a fine and decent neighborhood for family living.

The Castle Square portion of the South End moved into the early acquisition stage this year. Families are being successfully relocated and are receiving intensive relocation assistance. Relocation work in Castle Square has been performed by the United South End Settlement organization under contract with the BRA.



It is a prime example of humane and effective relocation work which is providing better housing opportunities for the residents of Castle Square.

The reuse plans for Castle Square will call for the construction of some 500 housing units to be available for displaced families as well as 100 units of housing for the elderly. It will also contain well designed commercial and light industrial space.

#### CONCLUSION

In addition to the work on the renewal projects in formal planning or in execution, work has also proceeded in the General Neighborhood Renewal Plan areas and in the area of comprehensive planning and the Capital Improvements Program. The Workable Program document itself contains the essential information on these efforts.

It should also be noted that copies of a comprehensive financial report submitted to the BRA were forwarded to the Council for its information in early July.



In conclusion, I would state once again my firm belief that Boston has now reached the action and construction stage -- the visual evidence of progress. The next few years will see well over \$100,000,000 of construction put in place, a record building boom for the city.

The favorable economic impact of this construction program in terms of payrolls, jobs, orders for suppliers and wholesalers, and increased business activity carry the benefits of this boom to the entire city. We look forward to continuing progress in the coming year.

J41.1 B<sup>2</sup>A 1

Boston Redevelopment Authority.

Report of progress on Boston's workable  
program of community improvement, 1962  
1963, 1964.









